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The President's Daily Brief

June 26, 1974

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

June 26, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

France and the Soviet Union may have reached a major agreement on construction of nuclear power plants in the USSR. (Page 1)

French politicians opposed to Giscard d'Estaing have harshly criticized the NATO declaration to be signed today in Brussels by President Nixon and other heads of government. (Page 2)

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The Soviets and Egyptians have warned fedayeen officials of alleged Israeli plans to assassinate selected commando leaders in Beirut late this month. (Page 4)

Moscow's chief negotiator on border issues with China returned to Peking yesterday after nearly a year's absence. (Page 5)

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Turkish

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Notes on Page 7 report a Soviet-Iraqi naval operation in the Persian Gulf and Pakistan

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Chinese

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FRANCE-USSR

France and the Soviet Union may have reached a major agreement on construction of nuclear power plants in the USSR.

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A French deal to build nuclear plants would probably involve the US indirectly, because the light water reactors used in France are built under licenses from General Electric and Westinghouse. The French have developed their own technology for fast-breeder reactors, but only one of these is currently in operation, and construction of a commercial version will not begin until sometime next year.

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The USSR has been exploring the possibility of foreign cooperation in constructing nuclear power plants in the Soviet Union, but until now a West German firm has appeared to be the most likely supplier.

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FRANCE

French political leaders of the left and right have harshly criticized the NATO declaration that President Nixon and other heads of government will sign today in Brussels.

The French politicians claim the declaration compromises France's independence and implies that President Nixon has the authority to speak for Paris and other West European governments at the Moscow summit. French President Giscard d'Estaing has no intention of reversing his government's decision to sign the declaration. These attacks, however, underscore the difficulties he faces in trying to improve the tone of relations with Washington.

Orthodox Gaullists are among the most bitter critics. Former defense minister Michel Debre termed the declaration another US tactic to subjugate Europe and bring it under US-Soviet hegemony. Former foreign minister Michel Jobert has joined Debre, reiterating that Paris needs to pursue a policy of national independence. Jobert spoke of the "subtle loss of liberty" that results "when one tries to please."

Critics on the left have raised their voices in a similar key. Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterrand spoke pejoratively of the "renaissance of Atlanticism" that the declaration entails. Communist Party chief Georges Marchais insisted that the National Assembly give its approval before the government signs the document, which he says threatens to involve France in "interventions and provocations" by the US beyond the region covered by the NATO treaty.

All of these political figures are outside the government and share only a desire to put Giscard off balance. Independence from Washington is a popular theme, and it will be difficult for Giscard to counterattack without appearing subservient to the US.

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SYRIA-LEBANON

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Ground-to-air missiles, probably SA-7s, were fired at Israeli aircraft attacking fedayeen targets at Palestinian refugee camps last week, but no planes were downed. The missile is not very effective against high-performance aircraft and will not deter future Israeli attacks.

FEDAYEEN

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The Soviets and Egyptians have warned fedayeen officials of alleged Israeli plans to assassinate selected commando leaders in Beirut late this month.

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Lebanese security forces may already be moving against suspected Israeli infiltrators. The Beirut press on June 24 reported that a number of Europeans, including British, German, and Swedish nationals, had been arrested on suspicion that they were on a "subversive mission for Israel."



USSR-CHINA

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Moscow's chief negotiator on border issues with China, Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev, returned to Peking yesterday after nearly a year's absence. The timing of his return--on the eve of President Nixon's visit to Moscow--strongly suggests the Soviets want to demonstrate that they can still deal directly, and perhaps even constructively, with Peking. The timing suggests also a hope of forestalling any embarrassing flare-up in Sino-Soviet relations during the President's visit.

With Ilichev's return in mind, the Soviets have placed a long article in a leading Polish newspaper outlining the border issue between the USSR and China. The purpose of the article, which is being excerpted by the Soviet media, is to convey the Soviet line on the border problem without directly tying Moscow to any particular position at this time.

There is no evidence that either the Soviets or the Chinese are prepared to make concessions that would move the border talks off dead center. The Polish newspaper article, for example, reiterates the Soviet contention that the two sides should confine themselves to "specifying" the frontier line that was "legally established" by prerevolutionary treaties.

TURKEY

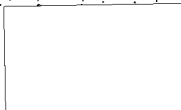
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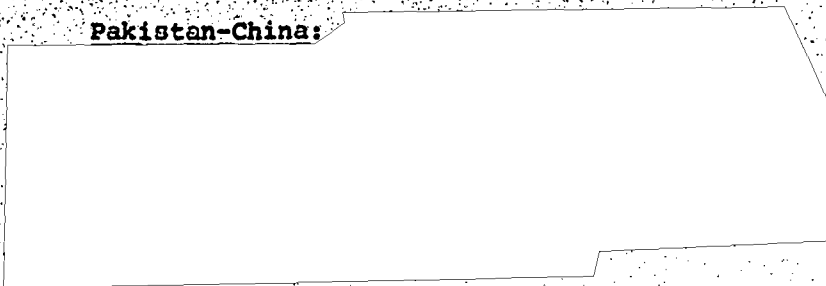
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USSR-Iraq: On June 6, a Soviet warship operated for several hours with six Iraqi patrol boats in the Persian Gulf. Soviet minesweepers and ocean escorts of the Soviet Indian Ocean force have visited Iraq on more than ten occasions since March 1973. Similar exercises with the Iraqi navy therefore may have occurred previously, but this is the first time there has been clear evidence.

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Pakistan-China:



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